

**Minutes of the
Equine Trails Subcommittee
March 6, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS) was called to order by Chair Sandra Batie on March 6, 2014 at the MSU Diagnostics Center, 1425 Beaumont Rd., Lansing, MI 48910. The following members were present:

Dick Kleinhardt
Sarah Nicholls
Sandra Batie
Gabrielle Hume
Mike Foote
Joni Gleason – By teleconference

The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff was present:

Jim Radabaugh
Matt Lincoln
Anna Sylvester
Earl Flegler
Darlene Moore

WELCOME

Chair Batie welcomed everyone and reviewed meeting protocol; public and committee introductions followed. Joni Gleason will be in attendance via teleconference.

AGENDA

Approval of the November 21, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Gabrielle Hume moved to approve the November 21, 2013 minutes of the ETS. The motion was seconded by Dick Kleinhardt and approved unanimously.

Approval of the March 6, 2014 Meeting Agenda

Gabrielle Hume made a suggestion of adding meeting protocol to this agenda.

Dick Kleinhardt moved for approval of the March 6, 2013 agenda and Sarah Nicholls seconded the motion. The agenda was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE/COMMENTS

Dale Twing, Chair of Newaygo Parks Commission and Newaygo Parks Manager has funding for equestrian trails and facility improvements. He desires improvements that provide economic impact to local communities. Chair Batie indicated that most of that area that is involved is U.S. Forest Service Land and for those lands, he would have

to work through the Federal government. However, if there are DNR lands involved, ETS and the DNR would be willing to provide what help they can.

COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS

Gabrielle Hume

Ms. Hume indicated she had been contacted by Tuscola County Commissioners who want to work with state and DNR to see if equestrian trails can be developed in their area. Ms. Hume asked whom she should work with within the DNR to set up a meeting. It was suggested that Donna Stine is the DNR contact.

Ms. Hume indicated that Brighton is on track with their equestrian improvements.

Sarah Nicholls

The Five Year Tourism Strategic Plan Committee is working on the implementation of the trails improvements. This is the first time “outdoor recreation” is being discussed at the Tourism Conference. There will be a breakout session for Trails. Biking is a new “tourism” attraction in Michigan. The Five Year Plan Committee is developing a marketing plan for the bikers. This plan can then be a model for a future “equestrian” marketing plan.

Joni Gleason

There is support from City of Ishpeming and Negaunee for a multiuse trail. It will be up to bike and equestrian groups to decide what trails that they are going to share.. There is a need for signs. The City of Negaunee is also interested in having an east /west trail across the UP. Ishpeming has funds for trailhead and trail development. They are interested in an equestrian campground at the Fairgrounds. Chair Batie and Ms. Gleason are working on support letters to the cities of Negaunee and Ishpeming.

Dick Kleinhardt

Mr. Kleinhardt appeared to testify to the NRC meeting on February 13, 2014 with respect to Big Oaks. Land Use Orders are to be approved at next meeting.

There is a proposed new law that would change the Michigan Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council’s name to Michigan Trails Advisory Council. Lee Grande- Kerry Mase is working with local people to identify who would be willing to maintain trails. There is a fence between the Shore to Shore Trail and the trails on Lee Grande. The forthcoming trail proposal will be asking for the fence to be removed so the connection can be made. This opening would allow equestrians to camp at Sleepy Hollow Campground and then ride on Lee Grande trails.

Sandra Batie

Chair Batie reminded the committee that they had approved an ETS letter to be sent to Director Creagh with respect to forestry-equestrian interactions and events. She reported that the letter had been mailed to Director Creagh. The Director’s response is that he

liked the concept of special trail protection, but would like to have MSTAC involved in the discussion.

Chair Batie also mentioned that she and Sleepy Hollow Board members will be meeting with Anna Sylvester, Matt Lincoln, Deb Jensen and others to discuss the concept of density in determining trail approvals. There is a possibility that Sleepy Hollow State Park may be able to add a trail to and on the island.

Chair Batie informed the committee that she was asked by the DNR to accompany them on a site visit for a potential purchase of a Girl Scout camp (over 900 acres) near Pinckney with reference to possible equestrian use. Chair Batie wrote a review to the DNR about her opinions of such a use. The review was written by Chair Batie as her opinion and not that of the committee--because the issue had not been brought before the committee. Her opinion was that the property is not perfectly situated for connection to other trails and that it would require significant amount of funds to make it user friendly for equestrian campers.

Chair Batie gave an update and reported on the Friends Summit.

Mike Foote

Fort Custer is still moving along. The type of pavilion that they were proposing seemed temporary in nature so it was not approved. They are working together to change the type of structure to make it more permanent.

DNR staff reports

Matt Lincoln:

Mr. Lincoln provided the committee with an update on ongoing projects and equestrian issues. He provided a handout.

Mr. Lincoln also discussed candidates for Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Initially, Stoney Creek Campground looked to be a priority for the grant request. However, about 70% of the amount of the funding was to be for improved access. About 1800 feet of the access road is controlled by the county and the state does not provide support for improvement of county roads. Because the resolution of this issue (funding for the county road improvement) will take some time. The request for grant funds thus turned to either Maybury or Pinckney. Most competitive right now is Pinckney in terms of the scoring of eligibility points for funds from the Trust Fund. Maybury was least costly but provided fewer "points" in the scoring system compared to Pinckney.

Mr. Lincoln mentioned why Rockport State Park, Big Oaks, and other projects were not selected as eligible candidates for MNRTF grant applications.

Ms. Gleason asked about Thunder Valley in the Upper Peninsula. She noted that DNR's Doug Barry talked about improvements and a connector trail last year. Chair Batie said she would check to see what was happening with this project.

Gabrielle moved that the ETS provide a letter of support with respect to the application to the MNRTF for Pinckney improvements. Mike Foote seconded. Yea 5 Nays 0

Matt Lincoln reviewed the process of MNRTF grant applications.

Sandra requested that Matt send the process presentation to her by email to forward to Committee.

Jim Radabaugh:

Mr. Radabaugh noted that there was a change in law for MSTAC members which staggered terms for members. 2 ETS members re-appointed Sandra Batie and Mike Foote—for 4 year terms.

Grants Review:

Mr. Radabaugh referred to a handout outlining equestrian funds and expenditures from three sources: the MNRTF, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Recreation Trails Program and the Recreation Improvement Fund. Mr. Radabaugh made suggestions to re-allocate the balance of the \$300,000 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund monies. He suggested a subcommittee of the ETS prepare a list of potential projects eligible to receive reallocations of funds.

Motion to approve the subcommittee Mr. Foote moved and Ms. Hume seconded. The motion was unanimously approved, 5-0.

Sandra will pursue the subcommittee together and determine when the meeting will take place.

Mr. Radabaugh also suggested the RIF and RTF combined remaining funds be re-allocated by lapsing the projects on hold and return the money back into the overall fund. This suggestion will be taken up at the next ETS meeting.

Mr. Radabaugh noted that the Land Strategy is still in the Legislature.

Gabrielle Hume

Gabrielle addressed the issue of protocol at ETS meetings. How can we reach a quorum when members cannot attend? She was informed that phoning in constitutes a valid

voting member. Also, in response to another question, Ms. Hume was told that the use of Constitution Hall for ETS meetings has been encouraged due to cost.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Joan Duncan from Marquette had a comment. She noted that the ETS has one member representing the entire UP and she believes this unfair. She mentioned some names as potential additional members. Chair Batie informed Ms. Duncan that Public Acts 45 and 46 mandates only one UP ETS representative.

Ms. Duncan was surprised that the existing Thunder Valley trails are also designated as mountain bike trails. Chair Batie said she would investigate this issue.

Ms. Joan Duncan stated that the 3 minutes is not enough time for public comments. Chair Batie lamented the short time as well, and will do her best to provide more minutes if they are requested before the meeting. Also written statements are welcome.

Meeting adjourned by unanimous vote.